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NEH launches Common Good Initiative

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) recently launched “The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square,” an agency-wide initiative designed to demonstrate the critical role humanities scholarship can play in our public life.

“NEH’s hope is to encourage humanities scholars and organizations to turn their attention toward public life,” said William D. “Bro” Adams, chairman of the NEH. “More specifically, the initiative invites humanists to engage in illuminating the grand challenges that we now face as a nation.”

Through NEH’s traditional grant-making programs and several special initiatives, The Common Good will encourage humanities scholars to turn their attentions to topics that have widespread resonance with the American people.

The agency has already taken steps toward this goal with the creation of two new NEH grant programs: the Public Scholar seeks to apply serious humanities scholarship to subjects of general interest and appeal; and Humanities Open Book aims to “unlock” great out-of-print humanities books by republishing them as e-books.

For details visit www.neh.gov/commongood.

LITERARY LANDSCAPE

With Both Feet Festival brings Norman Maclean’s Montana to life

News from the Montana Film Office

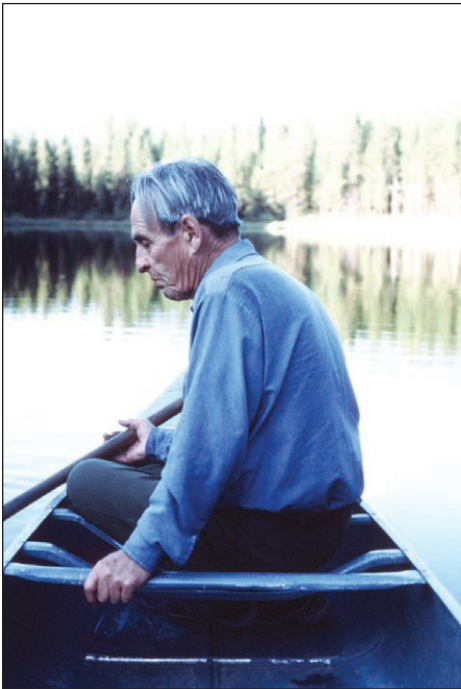
Talk to the world about Montana and you’ll hear a handful of things: national parks, grizzly bears, big skies, arctic temperatures, and *A River Runs Through It*.

Originally written by Norman Maclean and published in a collection bearing the same name in 1976, *River* has become a worldwide phenomenon representing Montana’s spirit, resilience and character more than any other work in the 20th century.

In honor of that, Montana filmmaker Jenny Rohrer teamed up with members of Alpine Artisans, Inc. and created “In the Footsteps of Norman Maclean,” a literary festival in the heart of the Seeley Swan to celebrate the life, work, and legacy of one of Montana’s most iconic authors.

On July 10, Maclean literary and film fans will gather for three days to engage in discussion about *River*, *Young Men and Fire*, and the effects of Maclean’s work on Montana and the national consciousness about the Treasure State.

Events include panel discussions on Maclean’s scholarly works and teaching career, film screenings, wilderness tours to areas Maclean wrote about and studied, jazz concerts, and a writer’s workshop hosted by Phil Condon, the director of the Environmental Writing Program at The University of Montana.



Norman Maclean on Seeley Lake
(Photo by Veronica Wald, 1981)

Prior to the festival, Rohrer and her team will host a screening of “A River Runs Through It” at the Top Hat in Missoula at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, June 25, featuring the film’s co-producers Annick Smith and Bill Kittredge. The two will share stories about the film from

inception, when they worked on the screenplay, to execution, when they served as producers. They’ll also discuss the impact the film’s legacy has had on Montana’s film identity. The screening is free and open to the public.

As a film, “A River Runs Through It” changed the face of travel to Montana in the decades after its release: encouraging fisherman and laypersons alike to visit the state and attempt to capture the spirit and heart so present in Maclean’s work.

More than 20 years later, travelers to Montana are still feeling the impact of the story. Writes Monica Bennett of the *Huffington Post*, “‘A River Runs Through It’ is an iconic masterpiece. The movie documents a time, place and events in our nation’s history that were as monumental as they were rugged.”

That kind of awe and experience is exactly what Rohrer is hoping to capture by bringing Maclean fans from all around the world to the Seeley Swan Valley and taking them even deeper into Maclean’s world.

As she told the *Seeley Swan Pathfinder*, “This festival is really ambitious ... It is perfect for Montana’s branding because it is an authentic, small-town festival to celebrate a world renowned author.”

More information about the festival or the events surrounding it contact Rohrer at rohrervideo@aol.com or 406-754-0034 and visit the festival at www.macleannotsteps.

Montana Book Festival set for September

A new incarnation of Missoula’s much-loved annual fall festival celebrating books and reading will be held Sept. 10-12. The festival will feature some of the familiar events of past years – a poetry slam, a luncheon with an author, an authors’ reception – with some new venues and events, including a Pie and Whiskey reading.

A new organizing committee and a new fiscal sponsor are making it all possible.

The festival took place for 15 years under the stewardship of Humanities Montana as the Montana Festival of the Book, attended by thousands of authors and readers. After 15 years of service by a small staff with a statewide mission, Humanities Montana was ready to hand over the direct production of the festival after the October 2014 event, with its continuing support.

By early November, a core group of people from the festival’s long-time steering committee met, along with others, to re-imagine the event.

Booksellers Barbara Theroux of Fact and Fiction and Garth Whitson of Shakespeare and Co., Missoula Public Library director Honore Bray and book publisher John Rimel of Mountain Press are now the new directors of the Montana Book Festival Association, registered with the state and dedicated to staging the festival each fall.

“I knew the bones were there,” Theroux said, “and I knew the town wouldn’t let it go.”

The new fiscal sponsor is the Missoula Cultural Council.

“The annual book festival is a great local tradition, and we’re thrilled to help with this transition,” said Tom Benson, Cultural Council executive director.

The new Montana Book Festival holds onto the mission of fostering interest in literature and the written word in a vibrant forum and nurturing a sense of literary community.

The organizers are already at work on the program for September and are accepting submissions for readings, panels and workshops, as well as looking for donations of money and volunteer time. Related organizations are lining up as well, including the Open Country Reading Series, Tell Us Something and the 406 Writers’ Workshop.

Here are the basics:

Website: www.montanabookfestival.org (hosted by Missoula Public Library)

To donate money: Send checks to Missoula Cultural Council, P.O. Box 7662, Missoula, MT 59807. Write Montana Book Festival on the memo line.

To volunteer: E-mail MontanaBookFestival@gmail.com. Consider putting together a committed group to volunteer at an event.

To submit books, panels and program ideas and see guidelines: Visit the website. Submissions will be accepted through July 18.

MONTANA POET LAUREATE

Little Girl

By Tami Haaland

From *When We Wake in the Night*

She’s with Grandma in front
of Grandma’s house, backed
by a willow tree, gladiola and roses.

Who did she ever want
to please? But Grandma
seems half-pleased, and annoyed.

No doubt Mother frowns
behind the lens, wants
to straighten this sassy face.

Maybe laughs, too.
Little girl with her mouth wide,
tongue out, yelling

at the camera. See her little
white purse full of treasure,
her white sandals?

She has things to do,
you can tell. Places to explore
beyond the frame,

and these women picking flowers
and taking pictures.
Why won’t they let her go?

